VOICE
OREGON

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VOICE

VOL. 37

ISSUE 1

OREGON VOICE

Staff

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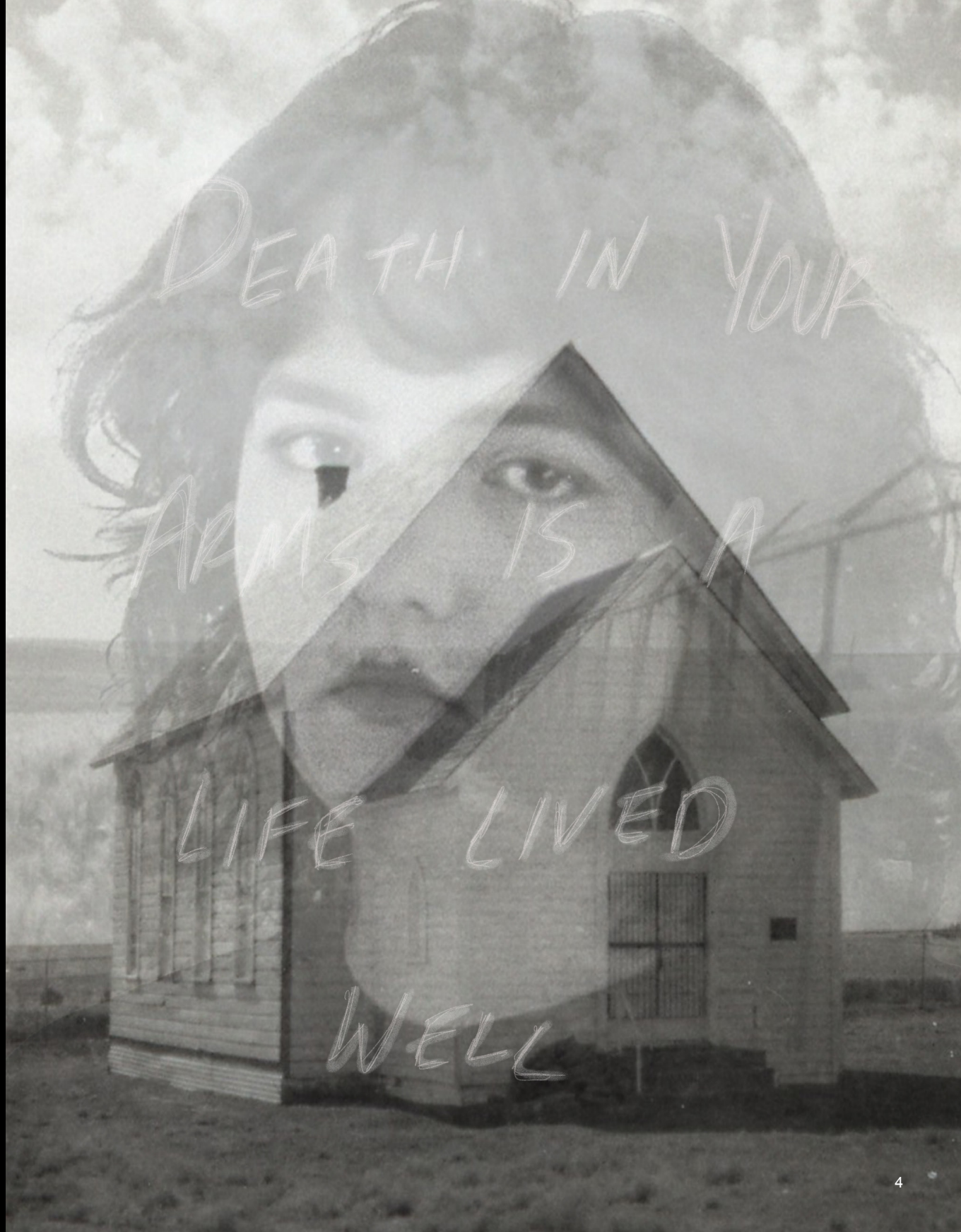
Letter from the Editor

It is the sweat on the brow of the maker.
It is the ache in the bones of the sprinter.
It is the prey in the eye of the hunter.

Obsession is love and religion and addiction and muse.

This is what makes greatness, but it can also drive people to do things they shouldn't. The works on the following pages explore both sides of that coin. This issue of Oregon Voice is dedicated to your obsession, whatever it may be.

Live for it. Bleed for it. Die for it.


DEATH IN YOUR
ARMS IS A
LIFE LIVED
WELL

The Writing Demon

by Mars G. A.

Initially, it's a cute hobby. You write books? That's cute! You're eleven and you wrote eleven pages of a story in your notebook, all of your own accord! Very impressive. Your fourth grade teacher introduced you to another teacher by saying you'll be an author one day. At the time, you disagreed. Now, you know she saw the future in you before you saw it yourself.

It really started up the year your friends outgrew recess games. Living a hundred lives and trying on a hundred faces lost its appeal to idle chatter. It used to be so easy to play with the others: to cradle them as they breathed their last, to flee the zombies on the playground, and to build fairy nests in the grass. This was living. A hundred names, roles, appearances. Everything from an angel to a demon. But your friends "grew up," so you started playing on your own; putting pen to paper and watching the stories unfurl. It gave you a tremor of joy, so strong it made your hands shake. In your head and heart, colors bloomed so brightly that they made your teeth chatter. The words couldn't come out fast enough.

Your moleskin journal is just another decoration on your desk. Your alleged friend doodles on it with a gold gel pen, and the rest of your seventh grade classmates steal it to sneak peeks. This prompts you to go digital. Now the worlds you spin are in your phone, accessible at any spare moment. Entire books come together in five months or less, and your mom spends a summer requesting that you at least go outside. Don't you want to see your friends? Don't burn your eyes on the computer screen. But the world is now found in a blank page, and some of your friends are fictional. They chat amongst themselves in your mind while you're idle. The only way to get them out is to write them down.

When you get to high school, it becomes more than characters that need to get out.

It accumulates fast. You're a speed demon now, but poetry and songs won't heal the stab wound in your back. Your blood is ink and it coats your fingers as you crank out 50,000 words in a month— and it's only halfway done! The blood stains all of your work, even the stories that have nothing to do with your pain. It seeps into everything, a dark shadow that follows you everywhere.

The pain in your hands begins on a long car ride where you cannot make yourself stop writing. Each time you put your phone down, your fingers itch. Your mind spins. The writing demon has possessed you. If you stop, the claw marks another friend tore into you will bleed— more. You were just beginning to walk again after the stab wound. No, you cannot stop, even when your fingers ache and your thumbs throb and you can't hold a pencil without pain shooting from your palms to your elbows.

Carpal tunnel. Others tell you: you have to stop. You're killing your hands.

You can't. You are the writing demon. Your soul wasn't sold, it was written. It's this or nothing.

Time off school lets your hands heal, but the carpal tunnel left its scars. You're used to scars by now. They're eased with a stretch. You forget them each time you open a new document. The writing demon won't be kept from writing. There are too many lives to live within the pages.

OREGON VOICE POLL

Who Haunts Your Narrative?

"LAURA PALMER"

"MY MOM BEFORE SHE HAD KIDS"

"JOAN OF ARC"

"THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT"

"MADS MIKKELSEN"

"MY 17 YEAR OLD SELF"

"CHAT NOIR"

"JACKIE TAYLOR"

"CHARLIE BROWN"

"ADORNO"

An Incriminating Confession

By Hannah Kaufmann

If I am not your valentine,
I'll kill you in your sleep.

You may think that I'm joking,
but into your house I creep
and as I pass the kitchen out a knife
I sharpen and obtain,
stalking past on risen toes,
a mind beyond disdain.

Your sleepy face cries angel,
but it can't save you now,
for you said no-
it's time to go-
but you'll be mine somehow.

So with a blade from hearth borrowed
I cringe but now it's not for show,
for I must slit your pretty throat,
a final kiss- of death- bestowed.

Sure, death is not ideal, but, hey!
You live if you're all mine today.
And I'll call off a pal of mine
if you will be my valentine.

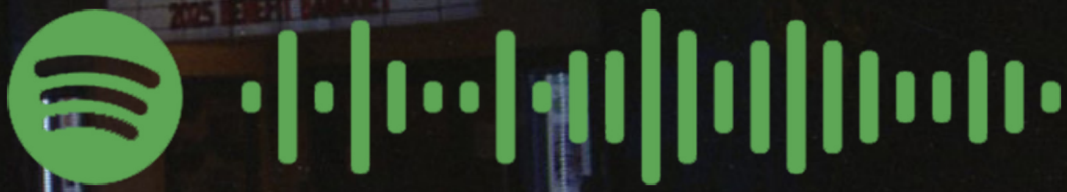
Maiden's hair
-Maidens blood
Spell of eternal youth

playlist

Silver Springs	Fleetwood Mac
The Other Woman	Lana Del Rey
obsessed	Olivia Rodrigo
Casual	Chappell Roan
The Winner Takes It All	Meryl Streep
lacy	Olivia Rodrigo
Image	Magdalena Bay
Angel	Massive Attack, Horace Andy
I Know It's Over	The Smiths
Oblivion	Grimes
It Ain't Me Babe	Joan Baez, Bob Dylan
party 4 u	Charli xcx
Flashbulb Eyes	Arcade Fire
Onanist	Ethel Cain
Money	Pink Floyd
Sunlight	Hozier
Drive	The Cars
Put Your Money on Me	Arcade Fire
Paper Bag	Fiona Apple
I Can Change	LCD Soundsystem
Master of None	Beach House
Devotion	Arlo Parks
Be With U	Coco & Clair Clair, DETO BLACK
What Am I To You?	Norah Jones
I'm Still in Love with You	Al Green
Boy	Book of Love
You're so Cool	Nicoel Dollanganger
Come into the Water	Mitski
Crush	Ethel Cain

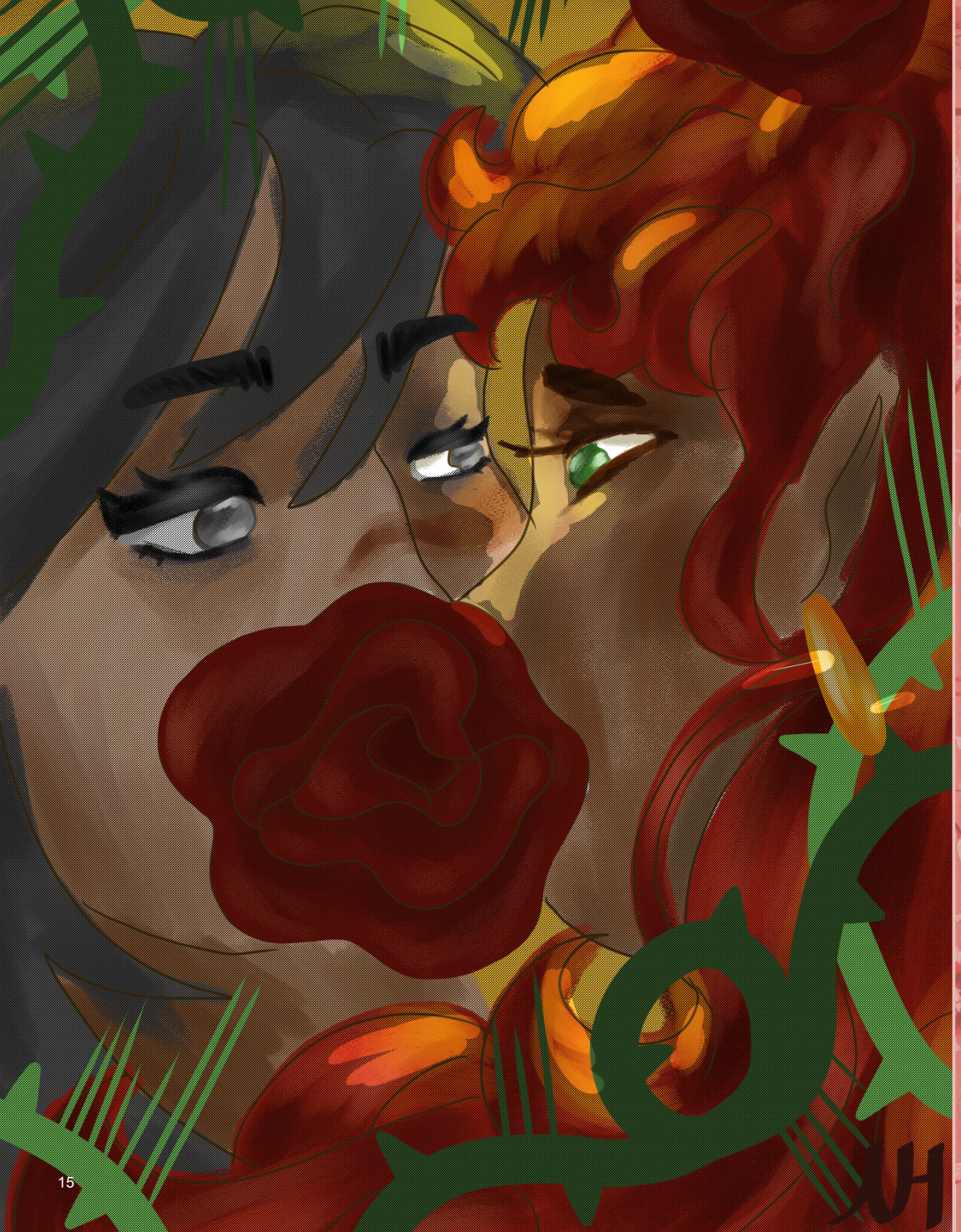
ist

LISTEN TO THE FULL PLAYLIST ON SPOTIFY



→OBSESS
DO YOU EY
THIN

I GOT ~99~
PROBLEMS
AND THE
PATRIARCHY
IS
ALL OF THEM



Oh, Sweet Cinnamon Girl

By Alexis Davis

Her tangy lips trace the lines
Of your body, leaving blisters
In their wake. She knows
You secretly crave
That searing sensation.
You've told her as much.

As her hand slides up your neck,
Your cool gaze is locked on
Her spiced eyes.
You betray yourself
And welcome the burn as it creeps
Along your jaw. Sharply
Constricting after each exhale,
Your useless throat knows
There's nothing left to be said.

They'll find a rash
Where she sat over you.
Patches of skin flaking off your pelvis;
From when you put up no resistance.
You won't even reach
For your aged yellow flag:
Surrender was implied.

Her teeth tug at your ear.
It stings, and you let out a noise
You've never made before,
And will never make again.
Soon, her mouth is on yours.
Painting your cheeks with sores
As you're asphyxiated by her desire.
Oh, what a sweet cinnamon girl,
They'll say.
Oh, what a sweet cinnamon
Way to die.

Oregon Voice Poll

What was your middle school fixation?

"The art hoe aesthetic"

"Owls"

"Fidget spinners"

"Hypixel Skyblock"

"Pirates of the Caribbean"

"Galaxy"

"Dolphins"

"Coldplay"

"The CW's Supernatural (2005-2020)"

"Detroit: Become Human"

"Books"

"Hamilton"

"Vegetable gardening"

"Voltron 2016"

"Twihard"

"D&D but make it fucked up homebrew"

"Holy emo trinity"

"Chernobyl"

"Lord of the Rings"

"Steven Universe"

"Miraculous Ladybug"

"Percy Jackson"

"Wednesdays"

"Walking Dead (but we're afraid "of zombies)"

Devotion by Hope Call

Hands cupped to the sky,
My aching fingertips grow self-filled callouses
from clasping together nightly.
In the mornings I rip off the loose ends like hangnails.

Who will I hang on my wall tonight?
Whose whisperings will I add to my shelf of paradoxical conflicts?
Whose altar will I cling to
to help me better understand the world, to reveal to me that the grass is truly
greener; and not ripped from its roots like I once believed?

Who will I get on my knees for and worship tonight?

Godly whisperings pull at my heartstrings, hard enough to invert me.
My flesh is exposed.
Has it yet begun to decay? Has August arrived? Has the sun thoroughly rotted through me?

I scour my body for one more stanza.
I want my passion, my overwhelming, overflowing self to rip open ribcages. To make the unfeeling
— overflow.

I run Him through my fingers like a rosary, religiously resting in my palms.
He's an atheist, but he looks at me like I'm God.
He is my prayer. And I am His disciple.

He treats me like Eve before the fall,
Before sin became eternal and hell became a promise.
To his altar I cling,
revealing to me that the grass is truly greener;
and not ripped from its roots like I once believed.

Wings

It had been three years, maybe longer, and the map of his body
was etched
in her palms. The stretch of his legs. The stiff, clean-shaven line of
his jaw.
His left ring finger, curved slightly inward. So of course she made
the discovery.

The first feathers appeared in a pair. She was facing him in the grey
wash of morning,
stroking the knoll of his shoulder blade, when twin quills broke
suddenly through the skin.
He locked himself in the bathroom for hours, cursing blankly
at the mirror.

They grew quickly, eclipsing his back like snowfall. In the moonlight they
were lustrous.
she would brush them gently with a damp washcloth, gather loose
feathers in a basket.
Under their spreading canopy his muscles formed tight knots, pulsing
like fists.

He complained about their aching weight, how they poked holes in his
favorite sweater
and sometimes, of their own accord, began to flap and pull his feet
from the ground.
Just think of all the usefulness, she said, fan on a flaming night or extra
warmth in winter.

But he became sullen, took long walks alone after dinner, absolutely refused to see a doctor.
He would not go to the beach anymore, even when she promised a three-color sunset.
Can't trust these things, he told her, and I'm not stupid. I know my mythology.

When he asked her to leave, it was another grey morning. He lay sprawled on his stomach
at the opposite end of the bed. He gave no reason, but she knew it was another woman
because their beauty was blinding. Even fully clothed he leaked gallons of light.

In time she moved on, ripped up his pictures and set the ridiculous basket of feathers on fire.
But some mornings she woke drenched in jealousy. Half-believing she heard a rustle,
she would stare at her husband's empty back and wonder if anything would change.

by Kim-An Lieberman

Respectrum

Abandoning art
Situationship with ex
Fear of holes
Asking high school friends to be your third on Hinge
Always seeing the good in people
No Respect
Adult twins
Cannibalism
Toxic roommates
Picking your skin
Codependency
Full work shift

Stalking crush's YouTube
Gay cannibalism (genre)
Yellowjackets S1
The other woman
Laura Palmer
Buying an Xbox for RDR2
Yapping
Respect
Affirmations
Finding your love in every lifetime
Romanticizing plague doctors
Has-beens

Respectum

How to be the least calming presence in a room

I grind my teeth. Loud.

When I sleep at home, my mom can hear me from the hallway.

All this, and for what?
This party trick
has been relegated to REM sleep.

So now I get to wear a retainer.

All 162 pounds per inch of bite force (estimated) goes into disposable pieces of plastic.

I can wear holes through the incisors

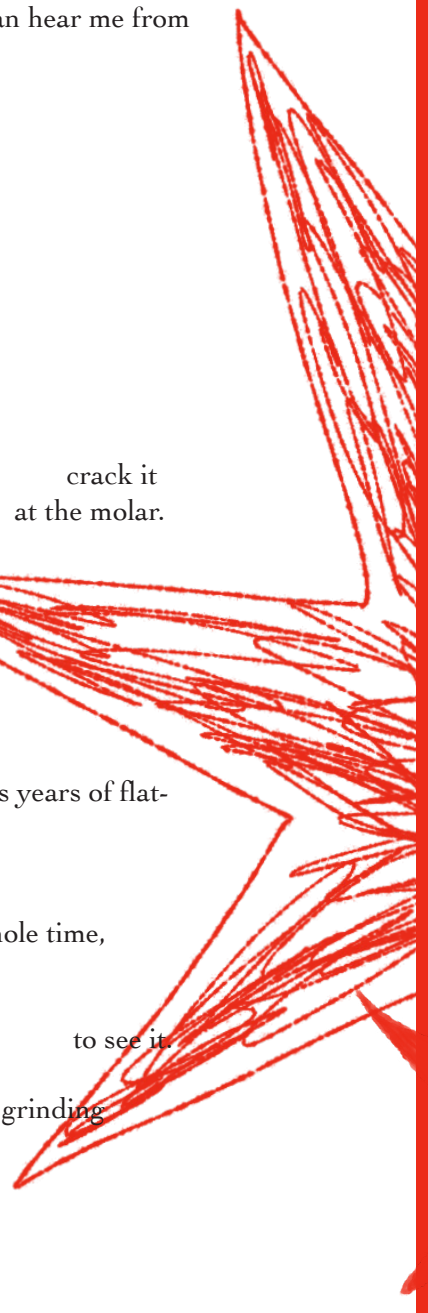
crack it
at the molar.

(My teeth are actually aligned like my mom's.
We have the same central incisor
that's being crowded out,
until she got invisalign.)
I am trying to take better care of my teeth cuz bruxism runs in my family.
My dad has it,
and he keeps telling me about how much fifty plus years of flattened teeth sucks.

I'm my father's
daughter. The proof was right here the whole time,

you just had to wear our enamel
down
to see it.

Did you know that one of the risk factors of teeth grinding can be "personality type?"
Tell me how to treat that, Mayo Clinic.
Personality type? Fuck off.



by Stella Fetherston

Electric Impulse

By Rebecca Kartchner

think about it again
ripping off a new scab
start fresh

fresh like bedsheets
out of the dryer
You
always
smelled like detergent
fuzzy like the memory

memory of You
a copy of a xerox
put through the shredder
paper strips recycle into
vaguely
You-shaped
pulp
overlapping records
turn to static
soundwaves shaped like
Your
outstretched
fingers
a game of telephone where
the story's gone garbled
the only
word
that recurs
is
Your name

there goes the scab
start fresh
fresh blood

New

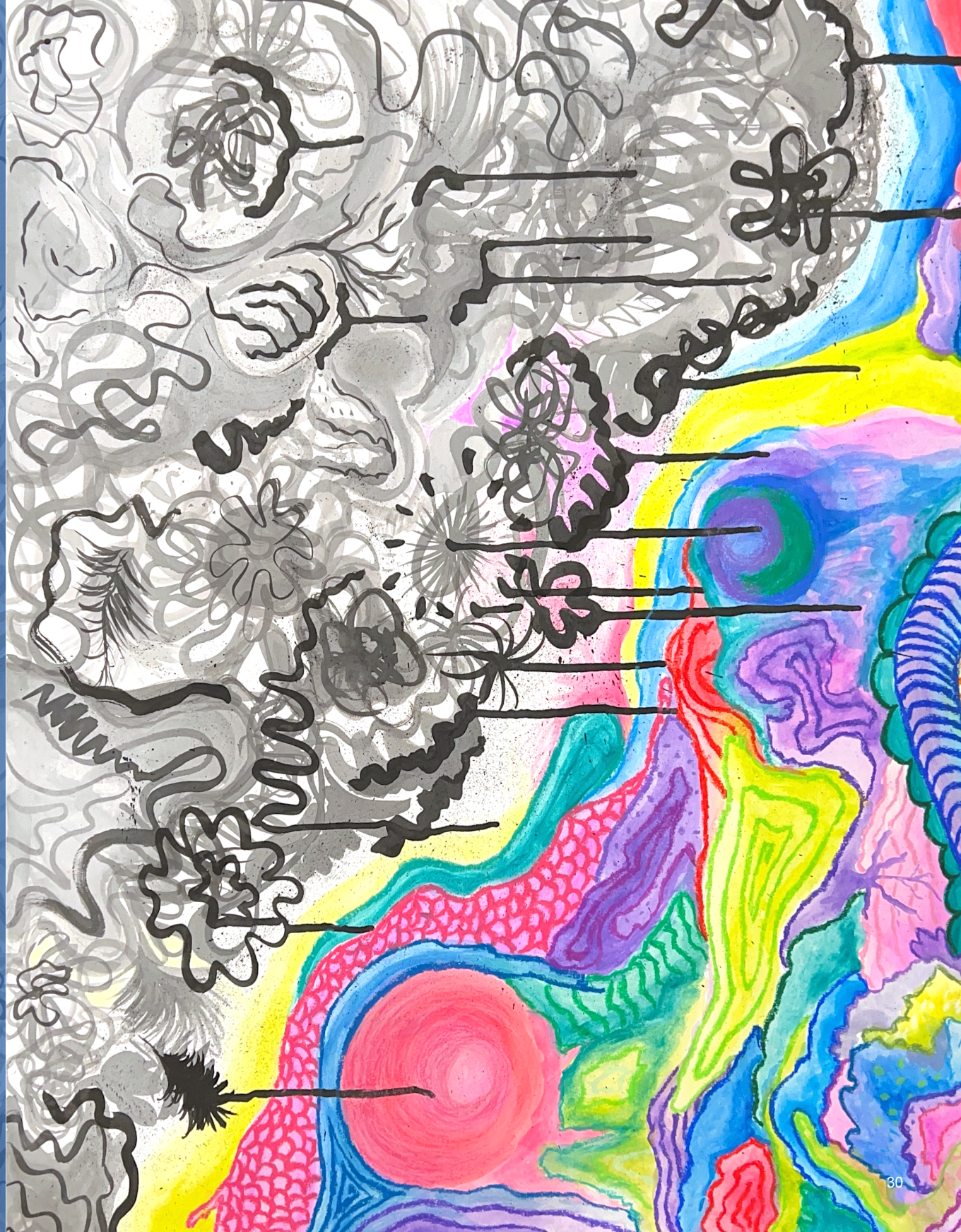
BY ELSa Rogers

It is the latest in a long line
The new thing, whatever It is, fills a hole
Uses a shovel to scratch an itch
One I did not know I had until yesterday
But now It is there, and there is no substitute
For the new thing

It feels good to have something new to do
I will unhinge my jaw so as to fit more
I must have more
I will think about It nonstop and I will see It with my eyes closed
It will consume me, grip me for weeks or days
Or maybe more

Until I inevitably let go and am seized by the next new thing
I will see It everywhere, in every thing
In colors and letters and numbers
Each coincidence is a connection
Maybe I am the only one who sees It
I feel unwell

Sometimes it hurts to know that this is illness
This good feeling is nothing more
Than crossed wires and bad firings
They can be quieted but not fixed
Ignored but not muted
Obsessed to no end



Who is on your

"Boq"

"Hiccup"

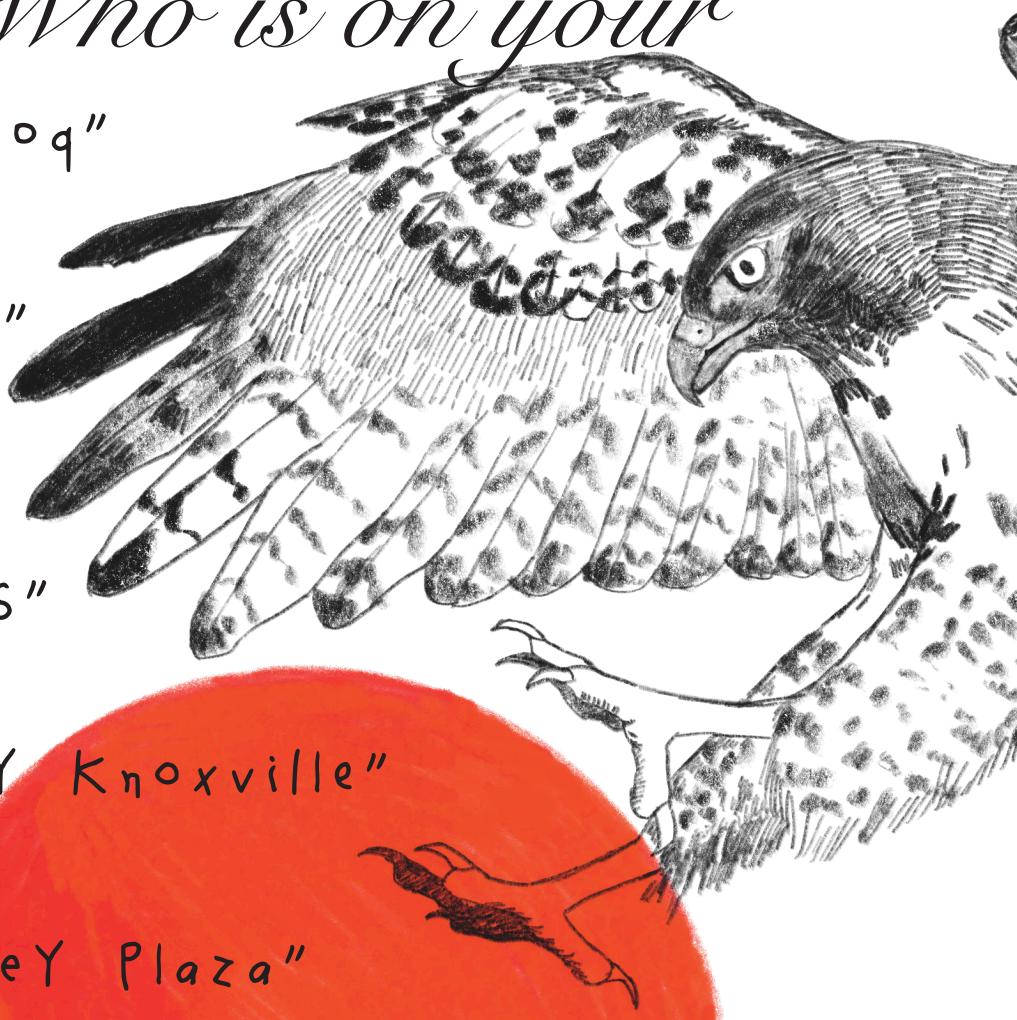
"Hexxus"

"JohnnY Knoxville"

"AubreY Plaza"

"Bad GuYs Wolf"

"The light fRom The Lighthouse"



hear-me-out cake?

"Philomena Cunk"

"1922 Count ORlok"

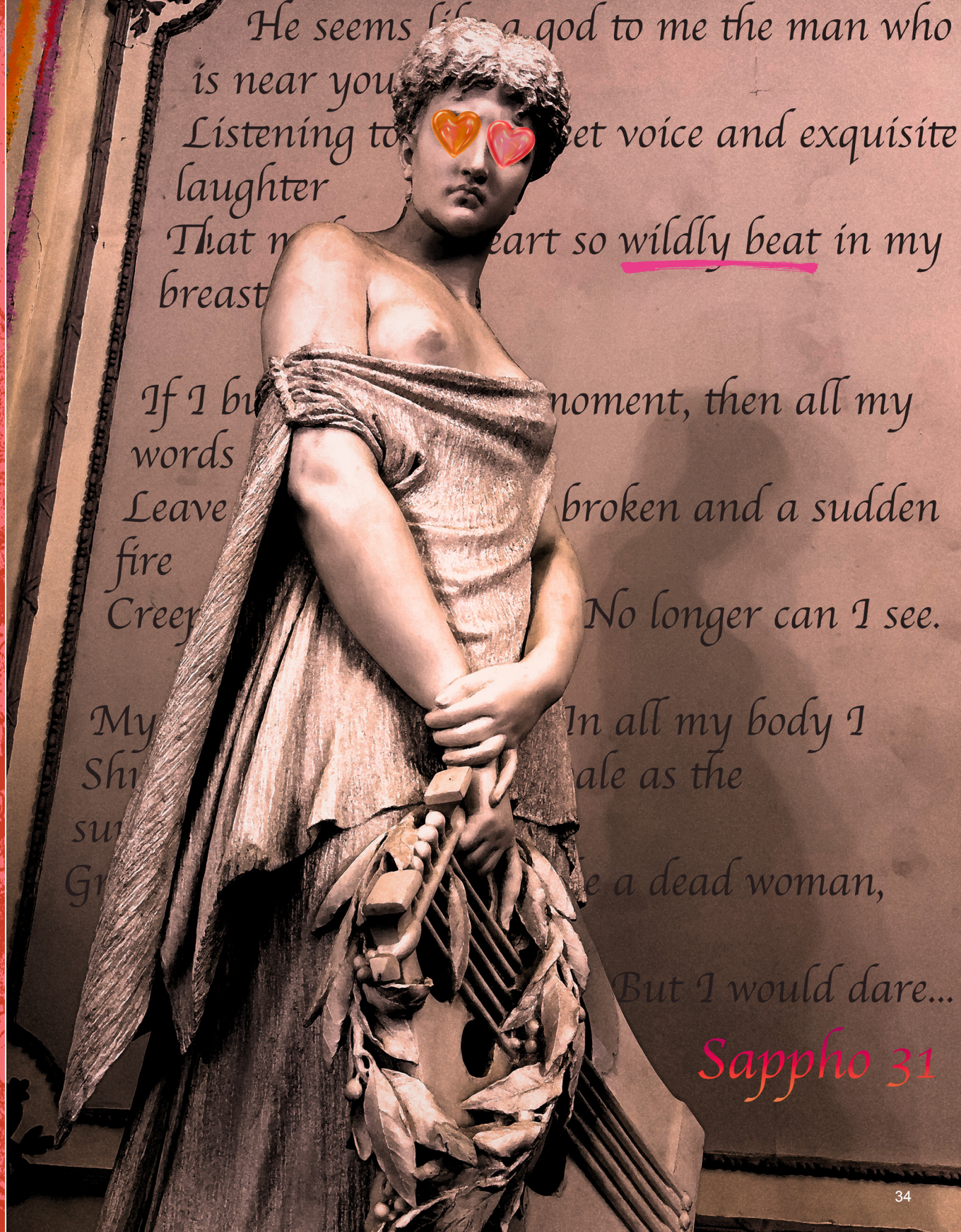
"Shayne Topp"

"Greed from FMAB"

"The Jack in the Box mascot"

G R F I Z F Z N M S G M A L H T Q R L Z
Q B U X D K J A B K P R R V O J V X W N
I P C E V I N V L W Z O A O U C E M O O
L I V E Y G W I E U Q M T S F T K I S Z
U N I J E O Y I E E K L O L P R T E K A
S L I L C X V H D C H S A J I A E Y T M
T P M T J C D P I H S R O W U G J P H L
B W Y T U D E R F Q B Z Y T Y X H C D A
C K L E N Q I S D A H J A O E X Y T Z R
U G R R Z M T Z L S V F L F U R J J N D
L N B C O K Y E U O N K M J U G S C N E
V F F E L F D R N I E C A R B M E P W H
E R R S V N C H X A I T M F R E N Z Y T
C G O Z A F O R B I D D E N S X Q F X A
M H A C M W X K S H O W G I R L Z M B C
I G T M P N G H E K E T P V X M T M U A
F M Q M I W U U U T T S J I U L T X Q E
Q H U I R E V O L N N X T E H C Z Q Z U
K S M K E S L Z M U W H J Q N O G Y X B
E Q F R G M R Z H H F X X Y S X R S Q Q

ANGEL
CATHEDRAL
EMBRACE
LUST
SECRET
GRASP
VAMPIRE
INFATUATION
WORSHIP
BLEED
CRUSH
FORBIDDEN
HUNT
LOCKET
MUSE
SHOWGIRL
VEIL
DEITY
FRENZY
IMAGE
LOVER
PERFORM
SPOTLIGHT
VOYEUR
CANDELABRA


He seems
god to me the man who
is near you
Listening to
et voice and exquisite
laughter
That m
eart so wildly beat in my
breast
If I bu
noment, then all my
words
Leave
broken and a sudden
fire
Creep
No longer can I see.
My
In all my body I
Shi
ale as the
su
Gr
e a dead woman,
But I would dare...
Sappho 31

When I was in fifth grade I loved unicorns. Traced their outlines with gel pen and drew in their flowy hair and soft coats. I read all of the books. If one of them had a unicorn I had read it at least three times before. I was never interested in horses, but there was something about the unicorn. She was hypnotizing in a way my nine year old eyes had never seen. Even after my childhood magic spoiled; no more santa, tooth fairy, easter bunny; there were always unicorns.

In sixth grade I met the real world, and I didn't like it that much. I ran off to my sketchbook of magic and wonder and the unicorns prevailed and stayed with me. Their magic blazed into my heart. It's strange in hindsight to think I could've believed in magic at eleven. That I wasn't past those delusions; and yet I did, so ferociously that everyone around me could feel it.

Eventually, I felt it less and less. The draw, the affection, the obsession. The magic fizzled out with my childhood spark, with my imagination. Sophomore year of high school and I couldn't pick up a pencil to sketch for the life of me. Hours of staring at blank paper, of wondering where that version of me from so long ago went. Unicorns trotting around my head, blurry vision and dreams and pink swirls melding together.

When I turned eighteen, I gave up hope that I'd ever really want to draw again. That there could still be a creative pursuit left for me after the years of burnout. Staring at the television screen playing The Last Unicorn movie from the eighties. I could still create, but the same sparkle wasn't present. I was watching my younger self fade into the distance and no matter how fast I skipped or ran she was long gone. Kicking up a cloud of stardust in her wake.

When I made it to college it felt like a breath of clean air. Within days I was drawing regularly, I had new ideas, I felt alive in a way that I hadn't felt since I picked up that unicorn graphic novel for the first time when I was six.
I think I owe it all to her in the end. Even if I don't think that version of me would recognize me now, I'll always be her deep down. So thank you to my eight year old self for bonding with a false horse so strongly. I carry both of you with me.

By Salem McGhee

I ~~CAN~~
WILL
BE
Whatever you want me to be
Just don't let me go

Oregon Voice Poll

Who is in your basement?

"A piece of my ex boyfriend"

"My SweatShop"

"Seventeen kids who I'm feeding canned Soup to"

"Best friend's evil boyfriend"

"Your mom"

"My Doppelgänger"

"Santa Claus"

"All the uncollected student projects in the Craft Center"

"Evil hookup"

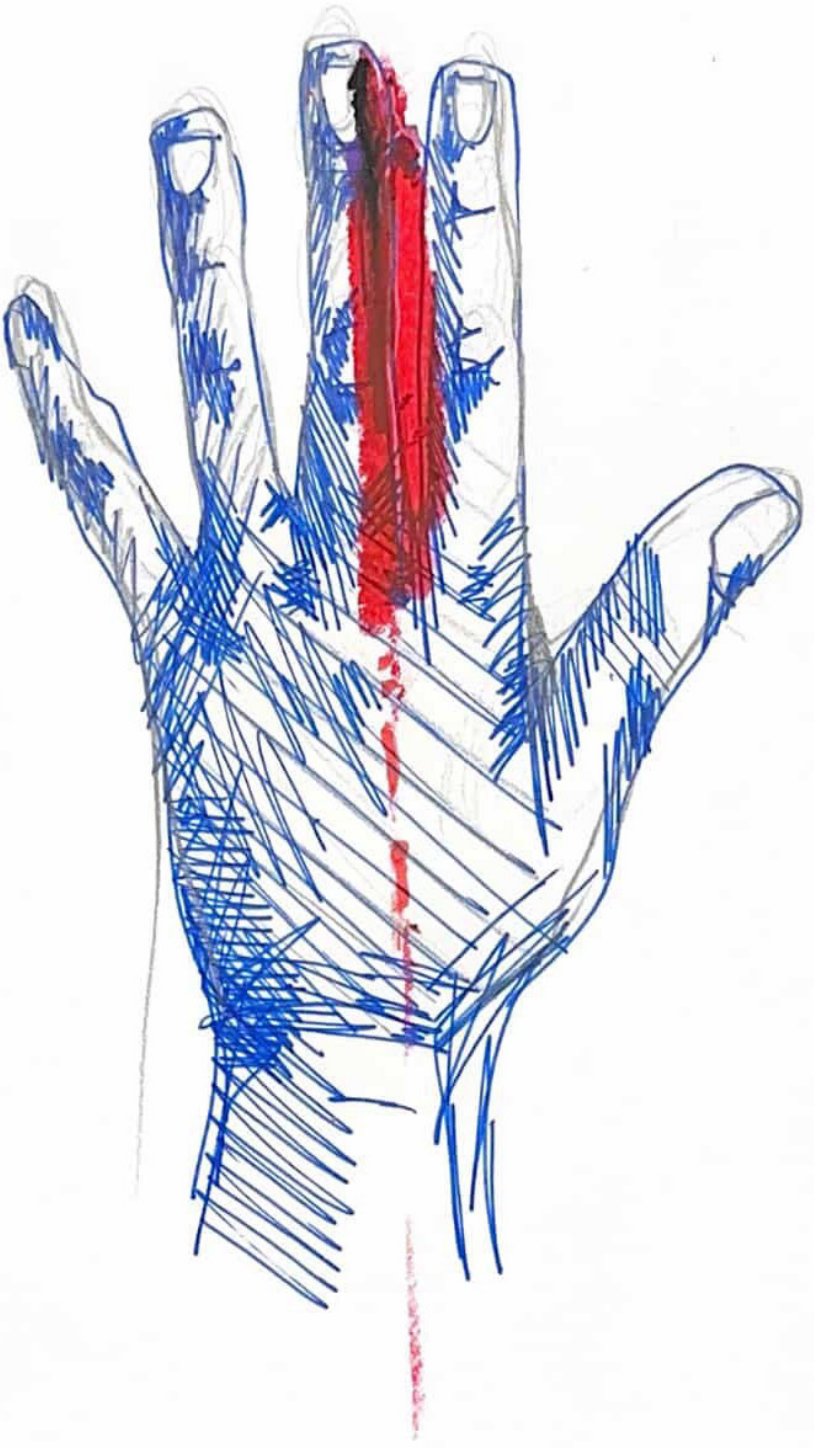
"Daphne from Scooby-Doo"

"Me"

Hungering

By Kimberly Bowman

this yearning settles between my ribs
like a firefly in a jar—
that is, not at all.
it flaps its wings against its cage
and i swear it illuminates
and destroys me at once.
i keep it trapped but it threatens to
burst past my lips like lightning,
like trains roaring through the night.
i know, i know.
i am blossoming and ripening
and still not sweet enough.
i hold my youth between my fingertips:
catching flying lights in the humid
mid-summer, harvesting fruit trees,
telling secrets to a boy i met this week.
once more, i am chastised like a child
and made to open my palms;
a bug has made a home in my hands
but i cannot keep it forever.
this dirt keeps me weak,
pennsylvania earth that wraps
its roots around my limbs
and grows into my lungs.
still, my appetite grows large
in the afterglow, when i breathe
in insects like it's my birthright,
like the stars are aligned tonight,
like astronomy will save me.
like if i threw this glass down
on sharp rocks, i could set myself free.



At a Party

By Zenon Reece

Sadness traces lines on love's palm
They are hunched together, laughing drunk and fumbling
with each other in a corner.
Their fingers
interlocking, hot whispers leaving lips and
meeting mouths
She pulls his hair. Is this sexy
He wants her. Is that enough

We are usually tired of it by 12
They end up breaking it off,
not quite sick of each other, but regretful,
calloused, bruised, burnt, awkward, aching, fooled

what are you waiting for?

My Monday night stream of consciousness...

By Jaimie Scott October 6th, 2025

For a good portion of the time I spend inside my head, I try to remember if there was ever a time that I existed outside of it. Realistically speaking, I think there had to have been. Surely, somewhere in my nineteen years of life, there was a point where I was drenched in an overwhelming sense of ignorant bliss.

A solid portion of my childhood where my innocence served as a shield from the inevitable endless worry that I would eventually be faced with. I have to wonder if the constant worry and overthinking is actually endless, though. If I choose to believe in a time before it, then I almost feel obligated to believe in a time after it. But then, when exactly would that time be?

When do I reach a level of clarity that allows me to make peace with my worries and accept them for what they are? What if that's just what death is? What if I have to spend my whole life worrying about getting to that moment of carelessness, and then that moment is death? Do I spend my whole life worrying about dying? What if I'm not okay with dying? What if I'm scared of it? Not even what if; I know that I'm afraid to die. What's odd is that I'm not dying right now. The future isn't guaranteed, but at the moment it doesn't seem like I'll be dying soon. There's no reason I should need to make peace with my death at this specific moment in time. But what if the key to leaving my anxieties behind is accepting the inevitable nature of death? How will I be sure that everything I'm doing isn't the wrong thing? If I'm not sure, how can I be okay with that?

I have a million questions constantly cycling through my mind, and I'll probably only ever answer two of them. I don't know why I think so much, and I don't know why all of the thinking that I do is wasted on the questions that make me feel the most scared. I get frustrated with myself because it bleeds into every part of my life. When I'm with people, when I'm alone, when I'm working, when I'm falling asleep at night, and then when I'm waking up in the morning. My questions don't get answered just because I'm having fun. They wait patiently below the surface until I can give them my undivided attention again.

Despite how things seem, I do the work I should be doing. I go to therapy, I've seen the psychiatrist, I talk about my feelings, I form meaningful relationships, I'm close with my family, and after all of it, I'm still my brain. Will everybody hate me if they know the way that I actually feel? If I'm honest, would they still keep me around? What if everybody already knows and they just don't mention it? Do I stress them out? Are they trying to help me? Am I hurting them? What if I'm so self-absorbed that I've been an awful friend? What if I'm ruining people? Do I dull their spark? Am I a bad person? Is asking this a selfish thing to do? I feel bad, but I don't always think that I am. I second guess myself so much that I can't even be sure what it is that I think. I'd like to know what kind of person I am at my core. If I strip away all of it, would I find that I am just a product made up of all of my worries? Who am I without them? Do I like her?

How do I know that I'm good?

Oregon Voice Poll

Who do you hunt?

Stolen Glance

by Alexis Davis

Stare back at me, dear.

Lift your eyes and meet my gaze, to see you
As I see you.

I do promise to let you go, my love,
But you won't want to leave.

Not once you breathe it in.
It's your perfume, baby
I've watched you spritz it on.

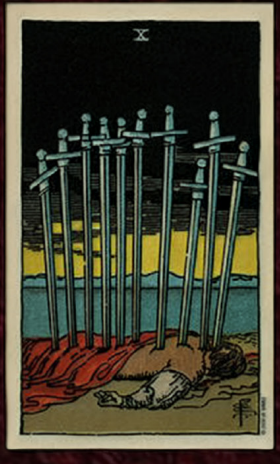
It lingers, as I wish you would; but no,
You never stay for long, honey.

Let's amend that.
I'll capture your image,
Hold you with me.

I promise
To not devour you right away, lover.

It would be a crime
To see a beauty such as yours
Dissolve too quickly; let them behold you.

For as long as you are mine,
You will have an audience
And we will be captive together.



The Obsession Issue